

PURIM

The Kedusha of the Day

The *Zohar* notes that Purim is similar to Yom HaKipurim. This means that what is accomplished on Yom Kippur by fasting can be accomplished on Purim by rejoicing. Furthermore, the very name Kipurim ("like Purim"), implies that Purim is the greater *Yom-Tov*, impacting a person more powerfully.

Indeed, *Chazal* teach that when *Moshiach* comes, all the *Yomim-Tovim* will cease to exist; only the *Yom-Tov* of Purim will remain. *Chassidus* explains that the *simcha* and *kedusha* of Purim are so great, that even when we have the *simcha* and *kedusha* of the *geulah*, Purim will still be special.

(תיקוני זוהר נ"ז ע"ב, מדרש משלי פ"ט, תוי"מ חט"ז ע"י 118 ושי"ג)

The author of *Chiddushei HaRim*, the first Rebbe of Ger, illustrated the powerful potential of Purim with a story:

There was once a Yid who set out on a journey, intending to commit a grievous sin, and took along five hundred gold rubles that he had patiently amassed over the years. On his way, he suddenly heard the heartfelt cries of a family in distress. They were being evicted for not paying their rent. His pity aroused, he gave them all the money that he had intended to use for the *aveira*.

His deed aroused such a great tumult in *Shamayim* that it was decided that whatever this man would decree, would materialize. However, to ensure that the privilege would not be misused, it was ordained that he become a drunkard.

Some time later, a terrible *tzara* descended upon the world. The Baal Shem Tov sent his *talmidim* to beg this drunken Yid to intercede and ask *HaShem* for mercy. They repeatedly found him drunk, until finally, catching him sober, they presented their request and he succeeded in abolishing the decree.

The *Chiddushei Harim* would conclude: Purim is a day of *eis ratzon*, when every Yid – like that drunkard – can accomplish great things, without limitation. However, to allow this to happen, one must make sure that the merrymaking will not interfere with this mighty potential.

(שפתים צדיק אות נ"ג)

In the Old Country, it was the custom in many communities to celebrate Purim by appointing make-believe *rabbonim*, policemen, judges and other important public figures. One year in Ziditchov, the townspeople chose Reb Koppel (the nephew of the *tzaddik*, Reb Tzvi of Ziditchov) to be governor, and he in turn chose some of his fellow chassidim to act as his advisers.

On Purim day, that entire band of masqueraders first drank *LeChayim* and then marched off to the *tzaddik's* house, filled with lively spirits. Reb Tzvi treated the young "governor" with great respect, and asked him to remove the candle and meat tax that the government had recently imposed. The lively "governor" agreed, but when he was asked to repeal the army draft on the Jewish boys, he refused. No amount of begging, pleading or threatening could make him change his mind, and the *tzaddik* left the room in anger.

The following day, when the effects of the spirits had worn off, and fellow chassidim told Reb Koppel of what had happened the previous day, he had no recollection of it. In fact, he could barely believe the story.

Later that year, the chassidim realized what had occurred on Purim – for the candle and meat taxes were in fact removed, but the draft remained enforced.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 300)

The Simcha of Purim

We read in the *Gemara* that on Purim one must drink "until he cannot differentiate (*"ad d'lo yada"*) between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai.'"

The *Gemara* relates a story of two *amoraim*, Rabbah and Rav Zeira, who had their Purim *seuda* together, sharing profound secrets of the Torah over a number of cups of wine. However, Rav Zeira was so overwhelmed by the intense *kedusha* of Rabbah's revelations that his *neschama* left his body.

The following day, Rabbah *davened* for Rav Zeira and brought him back to life. The next year, he once again invited Rav Zeira to join him for the *seuda* and to share the deepest secrets of

the Torah. Rav Zeira turned down the offer, saying, "Miracles don't happen every day..."

The Rebbe explains: The goal of *ad d'lo yada* (literally, "until he does not know...") is that a person reach a level of utter subservience to *HaShem*, which is not limited by his own understanding, and through this, all undesirable perspectives will be washed away. As a result, one will have the strength to continue this *avoda* throughout the entire year.

(מגילה ז,ב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1277)

On the first Purim after his *chasuna*, the Alter Rebbe gave a non-literal exposition of the *avoda* of attaining the level of *ad d'lo yada*. On Purim, he said, we must ensure that the *lo* – literally, "the No," that is, the things that are forbidden – should be *yada* ("known"). What we are supposed to do is well known, but one must also know what is forbidden, so that it can be treated with extra caution.

(סו"ת תש"ה ע' 72)

The *Megillah* says that after the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were blessed with *simcha* ("joy"), which *Chazal* understand to mean that they were now able to celebrate the *Yomim-Tovim*. The Rebbe explains that although *goyim* also have holidays, they celebrate them with drinking and unbridled conduct. Yidden, by contrast, even when they rejoice and drink they become closer to *HaShem*, and heighten their *yiras Shamayim* and their *kedusha*.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 920, ח"ד ע' 1274, וראה שווע"ר סי' רצ"ב ס"ג)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the merrymaking on *Purim* a source of *brachos* or a distraction from it?
- How does one rejoice on *Purim* in a way that brings him closer to *HaShem*?

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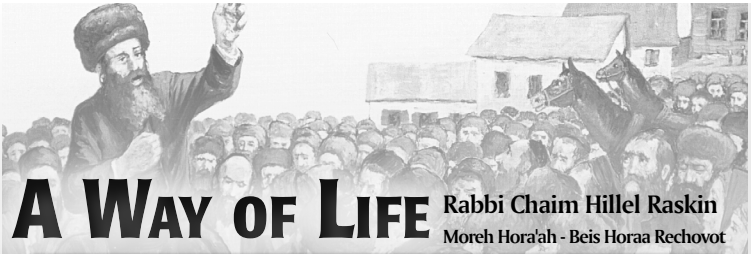


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Hora'ah Rechovot

OUR HEROES

Reb Yehuda Eber

Reb Yuda Eber was born on *Isru Chag Pesach* 5661 (1901) to Reb Avrohom Yaakov, a *melamed* in Krasniluky. He learned in Lubavitch, Schedrin and Rostov. In Kislev 5686 (1925) he married Freida, the daughter of Reb Mendel Schneerson, a great-grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek. He taught in several branches of Tomchei Tmimim in Russia. In 5690 (1930) he managed to escape to Riga, Latvia where the Frierdiker Rebbe was then living. Shortly after, he was appointed as *rosh yeshivah* of Tomchei Tmimim in Warsaw (which later on moved to Otvoztzk). Eventually he was also put in charge of raising funds for the central *yeshivah* and all its branches. He was a great *gaon*, and his deep *shiurim* were exceptionally clear; several of them were printed by his *talmidim* in the *sefer Sharei Yehuda* at the Rebbe's request. Being a talented *baal menagen*, he taught many *nigunim* to the *bochurim* in a very orderly fashion. Some *nigunim* he composed himself. He was killed by the Nazis together with his wife and two children in Kislev 5702 (1941), HY"D.

Once in one of the branches of the underground *yeshivah* in Russia, two police officers walked in on Reb Yuda giving a *shiur*, catching him red-handed. Reb Yuda immediately stopped the *shiur*. The officers asked why he did not continue, to which he replied that he was not their teacher, rather he had just answered a question they asked him. They didn't accept the excuse and he was arrested. His punishment was to clean the streets of the city. He would do so wearing his Shabbos clothes, demonstrating that one should be proud to be punished for teaching Torah. Although he cleaned the streets by day, he continued to give the *shiur* by night. A non-Jewish woman saw him sweeping and took away the broom, asserting that a rabbi should not do such a task. She did so several times until the officer watching him told him that he was thereby exempt.

(תשורה אקונוב טבת תשס"ט ע"ה)

Reb Nissan Nemenov related:

At a certain point Reb Yuda served as the *mashgiach* in one of the branches of Tomchei Temimim. He requested from the Frierdiker Rebbe to excuse him from this post, explaining: "If I see a learned *bochur* coming five minutes late, although the five minutes will not really affect his learning, I have to rebuke and sometimes penalize him. However, if I see a less learned *bochur* coming on time, I have to pat him on the back!"

The Rebbe responded, "Explain to the talented *bochur* that by coming late he is like a person that comes to the train station with all of his baggage but misses the train. On the other hand, somebody else might not have all his belongings with him but he at least makes the train. The talented *bochur* will be successful in his learning, but he will not merit being on my train!"

(אוצר החסידים ברחבי תבל ע' 300)

Mishloach Manos by Mail

Can I fulfill the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos* by mailing it before Purim?

- There is a general *machlokes*¹ on the nature of the obligation of *mishloach manos*. Some say that its purpose is to provide the recipient with a lavish *seudah*, while others say it is to increase peace and friendship (contrary to Haman's claims that *Yidden* are dispersed).
- Thus, according to the first opinion, a package received on Purim fulfills the obligation, since the recipient has it for the *seudah*.² However, the second opinion would require the giver to actually give it on that day.³
- If the package was delivered before Purim, some *poskim* say he fulfills the obligations on condition that it was sent after the eleventh of Adar (when the season of Purim begins),⁴ while others disagree.⁵ Some contend that the sender only fulfills his obligation if he sets a condition with the recipient not to eat it until Purim.⁶
- Similarly there is a question regarding sending *matanos lo'evyonim* to a pauper that will arrive on Purim. If the focus is on the pauper, the obligation has been fulfilled since he received it in the right time,⁷ however, if it's also about the giver, he is not *yotzei*.⁸ Some add that since a messenger for *tzedaka* automatically acquires money given to him on behalf of the needy (and the giver cannot retract), it is considered that the *matanos lo'evyonim* was also *received* before Purim.⁹
- Some say that a Jewish messenger specifically made for the purpose of *mishloach manos* he can serve as a *shliach* to give the parcel on the day of Purim, and thus the giving also took place on Purim.¹⁰
- To avoid all questions it is advisable to give *mishloach manos* and *matanos lo'evyonim* after *megillah* reading on Purim day. This is also preferable according to *kabalah* and allows these *mitzvos* to be included in the *bracha* of *Shehechyanu* made on the *megillah* reading.

1. תרומת הדשן סי' ק"א, מנות הלוי למהר"ש אלקבץ.
 2. באה"ט או"ח סי' תרצ"ה סק"ו.
 3. שו"ת לבושי מרדכי או"ח סי' ק"ח שו"ת תורה לשמה סי' קכ"ח.
 4. דעת תורה למהר"ש"ם סי' תרצ"ד. ויש שהכריעו הכי בשעה"ד - ראה נט"ג פנ"ו ס"ו.
 5. שו"ת אבן שהם סי' י"ד.
 6. שו"ת אהל יוסף סי' ט"ו וראה אשל אברהם בוטשאטט סי' תרצ"ד.
 7. ראה פסק"ת סי' תרצ"ד סק"ח בבאור המג"א שם סק"א.
 8. ברבי"י סו"ס תרצ"ד, ערוה"ש סי' תרצ"ד סק"ו.
 9. ערך שי' סי' תרצ"ד.
 10. ראה שו"ת במראה הבוקר ח"ו תשו"נ י"ד.

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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Challenges of Jewish Music

After becoming *frum* through Lubavitch, a musician asked the Rebbe whether he should begin producing music in the spirit of Torah. In a handwritten response dated 5743 (1983), the Rebbe made him aware of the dangers involved:

"Generally speaking, based on the principle of serving Hashem with every medium, the plan is clearly a good one. However, particularly in the area of music, inspirational music (which is profitable), is secular. Moreover, this music is based on appealing to the *yetzer hara* of the listener, by breaking all concepts of boundaries and order.

"On one hand, this only intensifies the urgency to create appropriate music, since it is literally life saving. However, on the other hand, this intensifies the challenge to compete with the present situation...

"More importantly, this begs the question: How will it be insured that your music will not introduce the listener to the rest of the music world, which for the most part is boundary-breaking? Furthermore, most music teaches that everything is permitted, everything is appreciated, everything should be tasted by the person himself, and later in life he should make his own decisions, independent of all 'pre-conceived' ideas..."

(Dem Rebbe's Kinder p. 204)

לע"נ אהרן בן יצחק ע"ה שפיגל נפטר ו' אדר ב' תשמ"ט

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